PITKINS CURVE : RAIN ROCKS

Highway Improvement Project

PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

Purpose:

The purpose of the Pitkins Curve/Rain Rocks improvements project is to:

- Substantially decrease maintenance expenditures,
- Appreciably increase roadway reliability, dependability and safety,
- Increase highway worker safety, and
- Minimize environmental impacts.

Need:

- Unpredictable and extensive landslides repeatedly occur at Pitkins Curve/Rain Rocks, reducing or severing travel on Highway 1 for months at a time.
- It costs more to restore and maintain this location than any other location on the Big Sur Coast Highway. More than one million dollars a year is spent at Pitkins Curve/Rain Rocks, compared to the other unstable Big Sur Coast Highway locations needing regular maintenance, which require between $10,000 and $20,000 each year. Availability of emergency funding is uncertain.
- The Big Sur community relies on Highway 1 as its sole transportation corridor for essential and emergency services and to support its tourist economy. When travel is disrupted, local and regional tourist economies are profoundly affected.
- Highway workers regularly operate in areas of active rockfall while restoring and maintaining the roadway at Pitkins Curve/Rain Rocks.
- Emergency highway work restricts highway restoration methods and environmental impacts, particularly those associated with soil disposal, are difficult to avoid or minimize.
- The hillsides will continue to slide, the highway will be damaged repeatedly, and it will likely be severed again.

Alternatives:

- **Alternative 1:** This alternative would construct a bridge at Pitkins Curve and a rock shed at Rain Rocks.
- **Alternative 2:** This alternative would construct a bridge at Pitkins Curve, retain the rock net and continue with active management at Rain Rocks.
- **No-build Alternative:** This alternative would make no improvements to the Pitkins Curve/Rain Rocks location. Active management of the location would continue.

Preferred Alternative:

Caltrans Prefers Alternative 1: Build a bridge at Pitkins Curve and a rock shed at Rain Rocks:

- The bridge and rock shed provide the most reliable and dependable transportation facility.
- Over the project life (50 years), the cost of building and maintaining the bridge and rock shed (Alternative 1) is comparable to the cost of building the bridge and continuing with active management of the Rain Rocks location (Alternative 2).
- The bridge and rock shed minimizes time highway workers operate in rock fall areas.
- Building the bridge and rock shed concurrently under a single construction contract would take less time and cost less than building them sequentially under separate construction contracts.

Schedule:

- **3/06 Circulation of Draft Environmental Impact Report and public hearings**
- **6/06 Approval of Final Environmental Impact Report**
- **7/08 Completion of Project Design**
- **3/09 Start Construction**
- **3/13 End of Construction**

Costs:

- Cost to build and maintain each alternative over the 50-year life span of the project:

ACTIVITY	ALTERNATIVE 1: Bridge and Rock Shed	ALTERNATIVE 2: Bridge	NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE
Construction Costs	$26.5 to 35.6 million	$16.2 to 19.2 million	N/A
Maintenance Costs	$1.7 million	$ 9.0 million	$ 112.0 million
Total Costs	$28.2 to 37.3 million	$25.2 to 28.2 million	$ 112.0 million

- Maintenance activities include annual removal of soil and regular replacement of rock net. Costs were based on the last six years of actual maintenance expenditures and escalated for the estimated life span of the project, which is 50 years, using a 3% annual inflation rate. Does not include cost of highway restoration in the event of a catastrophic failure.
- In the event of a catastrophic failure, the cost to restore the highway is estimated to be in excess of $45.0 million.

LOCATION & VICINITY